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## WHITE HOUSE EXPECTED TO MAKE DECISION SOON ON GATES NOMINATION

BY JOAN MOWER

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Reagan administration, aware of Robert Gates' potential problem in gaining Senate confirmation as head of the CIA, probably will decide early this week whether to withdraw the nomination, the Senate minority leader said Sunday.

Sen. Robert Dole, R-an., also said he didn't think it would be a good idea for Gates, the acting CIA director, to be "sort of held out there for five or six months" until special congressional committees conclude their investigations into the Iran-Contra affair.

Gates, 43, a top CIA official during the period in 1985 and 1986 when U.S. weapons were shipped secretly to Iran and profits diverted to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, was nominated last December to succeed William J. Casey, who resigned after being operated on for brain cancer.

Earlier this month, the Senate intelligence committee grilled Gates about his knowledge of the weapons shipments to Iran, and Sen.rlen Specter, R-Pa., voiced concerned about Gates' role in Iran-Contra affair.

Dole, appearing on NBC-TV's "Meet The Press," was asked whether he thought Gates' nomination should be withdrawn.

"I know it's been discussed at the White House," Dole replied, explaining that he had indicated to President Reagan last Thursday that Gates' nomination "could be in some difficulty if there was a demand" for a quick vote.

Dole, who is canvassing other senators to gauge support for Gates, said he has not completed his informal poll. Once he does, he is expected to inform Howard Baker, the new White House chief of staff.

"I would guess that there would be some judgment made on this early this week," he said.

Sen. David Boren, D-Okla., chairman of the intelligence committee, has said he will ask for an early vote on the Gates' confirmation because it is unwise for the CIA to be run by a temporary leader.

The Senate panel would have to confirm Gates before his name was sent to the full Senate.

Meanwhile, Brent Scowcroft, a member of the Tower commission and rumored as a possible person to succeed Casey if Gates' nomination is withdrawn, said no one had discussed that possibility with him.

Scowcroft, a former national security council adviser who also appeared on "Meet the Press," refused to discuss whether he would want the job, calling the question "purely hypothetical."

The Tower panel, a three-member board headed by former Sen. John Tower, R-Texas, released a 300-page report last week that was sharply critical of the Reagan administration's handling of the Iran-Contra case.

Asked about what the Tower commission had learned of Gates' involvement, Scowcroft said that until February 1986, Gates was head of the CIA's analytical staff. Scowcroft called the division between the CIA's analytical and operations staffs "the widest gulf in Washington."

Reagan formally approved selling weapons to Iran in a written "finding" January 1986. He apparently gave verbal approval for the 1985 shipments through Israel, although there has been a dispute over when the presidential permission was obtained.

Scowcroft also said the discussion about whether intelligence reports on Iran in 1985 had been doctored by the CIA to back up the objective of selling weapons to Tehran should not disqualify Gates' nomination.

"We merely call attention to that (slanting intelligence) as something that has to be guarded against," Scowcroft said.

The Tower commission found no evidence that Gates knew about the scheme to divert profits to the Nicaraguan Contra rebels, he said, but he added the panel had only scratched the surface of funding for the rebels.

In another development, the Los Angeles Times reported in Sunday's editions that Gates has given the Senate intelligence panel a classified memo to disprove reports he recommended a joint U.S.-Egyptian invasion of Libya in 1985.